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# Editorials

## Is it a world gone mad?

For the average man, it seems that a look at events in the news shows a world gone mad. One thing that feeds this feeling of absurdity connected with our world involves excessive pay demands made by those people employed by governments.

Members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada have been conducting a series of illegal rotating strikes and various place in the civil service. Last week they decided to

picket Toronto's main postal terminal again, and the airport.

They are presently negotiating (off and on) with the government. The negotiations have gotten nowhere and the rotating strikes are conducted to speed up a settlement.

Well most people accept the fact that unions have gone too far these days in their demands. Union workers, who have the power to strike are sitting pretty, while non-union workers are hard-hit by inflation fueled by union settlements.

But even the teachers have abandoned all pretense that they care about the quality of education or runaway inflation, or the fact that we have double-digit inflation at the same time the economy is declining.

## School bus damage can be prevented

Damage to school buses, operated by Travelways Ltd., runs at the rate of \$7,500 per year; according to a spokesman for that company. Most of the damage, done by children riding on the buses, involves seat upholstery being ripped and slashed.

The problem is a serious one, probably more serious than most parents realize. The solutions, however, may be obvious. First of all, the school buses could be equipped with hard fiberglass seats, instead of the present upholstered one. In that way, they are virtually indestructible.

Another way to deal with the problem is to give the bus drivers authority to ban students from the buses. The offending youngster would not be able to get away with it so quickly, because he would lose his bus privileges.

These may seem like extreme measures, but destruction should not be encouraged nor tolerated.

It is obvious that teachers are interested firstly, as are the members of the Public Service Alliance, in one thing — more money. Everybody seems to think that if its the government, they can demand any kind of settlement and get it.

After all, government does not have to make a profit as private business does. No just raise taxes.

We hope the government and the school board and the provincial education people stand firm in the face of these excessive demands. Canada needs moderation now in the face of difficult economic times ahead.

High settlements could trigger a new round of price increases and throw the Canadian economy into a further tailspin. Moderation now could mean that the rate of inflation will moderate and the economy will revive.

We hope the government understands that. The workers and teachers certainly don't.

## Budget cut unnecessary

Council feels that it should cut budgets that come before it from various groups that depend on the town for financial support. When a budget is cut councillors feel that they are doing their part in saving the taxpayers money.

Well that might be. But the \$3,000 cut from the library budget was totally unnecessary. The library has

come along way in the past year. To stifle growth now would be a slap in the face to the hard work of librarian Lynne Robbins.

Even the budget presented before the cut was "bare bones", according to Mrs. Robbins. It is not the time to be cutting the library budget.

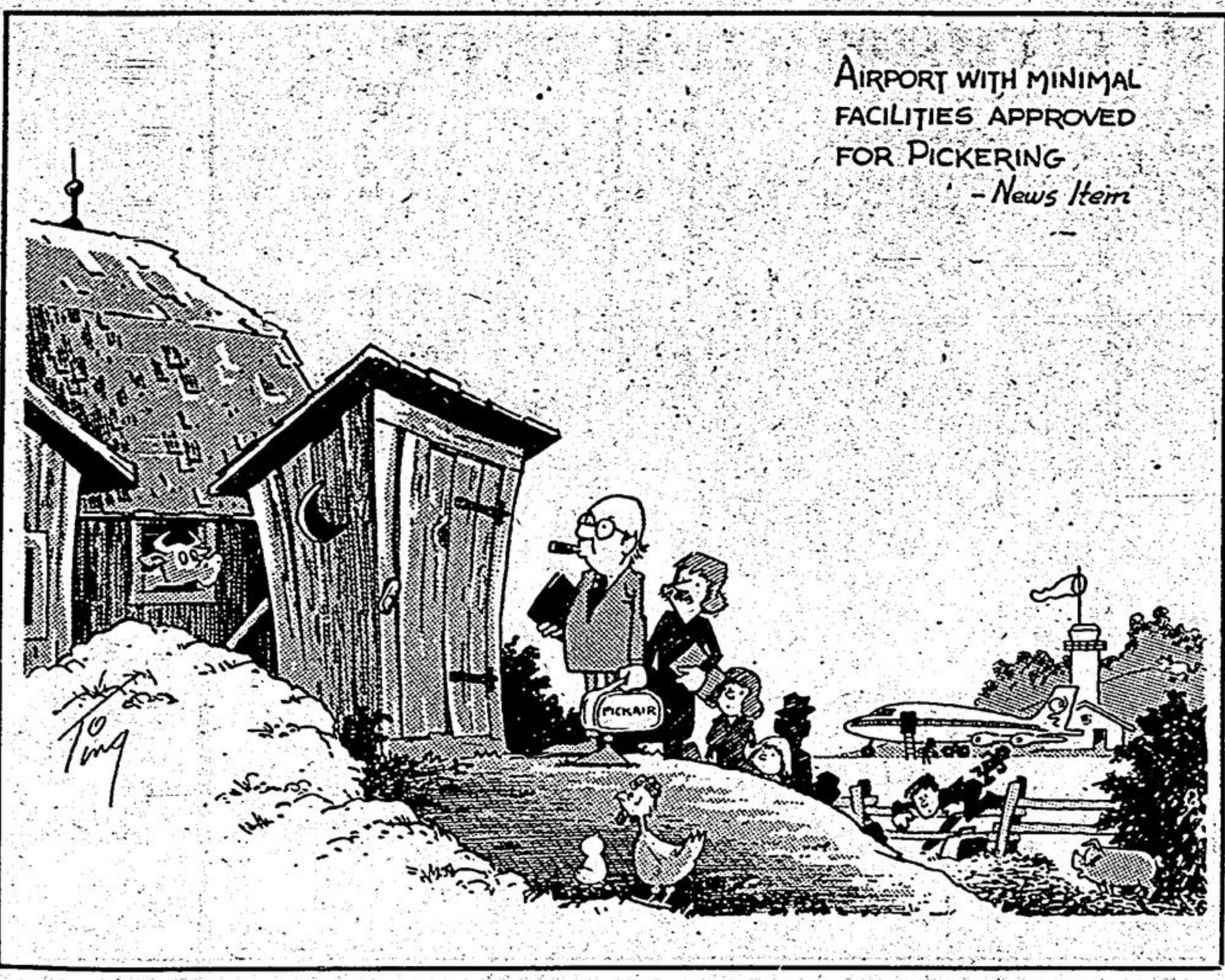
The service has been improved and should be improved further, but penny-pinching on the part of council could, not only create disenchantment with the library on the part of those who have started using it, but could lose the town a top-notch librarian who almost single-handedly pulled Stouffville's library service into the 20th century.

## Parking land is a real bargain

The town has completed a deal for the BP property on Main St., next to the Bakery, to be used for off-street parking. It appears that the town got a bargain. The land cost \$15,000 to buy, and will cost another \$10,000 to be suitable for parking.

It is a first step in providing adequate parking for people who park their cars downtown all day. Few people will use it when they do their shopping, but at least more spaces will be made available.

A sensible plan for further land acquisition for parking will mean that the downtown core will not be choked with cars as Stouffville grows.



AIRPORT WITH MINIMAL FACILITIES APPROVED FOR PICKERING — News Item

Thirty years ago this week

Excerpts from the Tribune from March 22, 1945

**NO PEANUTS.**  
 You probably haven't noticed, but peanuts are practically off the market much of the time, and the supply at its best is limited. This was the reason given us last week why there was no peanut vendor at the public auction sales this spring. Percy Dike, peanut king of the district, hasn't been seen with his bag over the back for a long time, but he hopes that when the nuts are available he will be able to supply those who like something to munch when watching the auctioneer chew his cud.

**NICKEL MATINEE**  
 Children's 5 cent matinee at the Stanley Theatre every Saturday afternoon. Door open at 2 p.m.

**CO-OPERATIVE**  
 The first annual meeting of the Stouffville Co-operative Association was held in the Municipal Hall on March 16.



## SUGAR AND SPICE

### Postal strikes draw Bill's ire

By BILL SMILEY

I have personally had it, with the Canadian Postal Service, so called.

I am sick to death of postal strikes and threats of strikes.

And I almost throw up every time Honorable Bryce Mackasey, minister in charge of the post office, comes on television to state bluntly that postal employees last year stole only a million dollars or whatever, which is just a drop in the bucket, and that we have the third best postal service in the world.

His first statement practically condones theft by public employees. His second must be something he hallucinated while recovering from an overdose of stamp glue.

Admitted that for years, postal employees were sorely underpaid, and most of them were in the job only for the security it offered.

But the security is still there, and they are now far from sorely underpaid. Some of them, in view of what they do, and the relatively simple qualifications required, may be overpaid, in comparison with some other jobs.

Admitted, many postal jobs are unexciting, even boring and monotonous. This is no excuse for the flouting of the public's needs, or for the thumb-to-the-nose attitude towards the government employer of the postal workers.

Nobody forced those people to work in the post office. Plenty of other jobs are just as monotonous. If they wanted excitement why didn't they go into high steel work or massage parlors?

Isn't it about time for a showdown? Either Canada gets a first rate postal service, as we used to have, or we scrap the whole thing and turn it over to private enterprise.

In my far from humble opinion, the latter course should have been taken years ago. For the past several decades, the performance of the post office in this country has been a dismal one.

Each year, efficiency decreases; each year the costs increase. Each new broom

appointed as minister has carefully swept the dirt under the rug, instead of out the door.

I think it's too late for a purge in the post office, which has become so constipated that nothing short of dynamite would move those turgid bowels.

No new minister has the guts to go in and ream out the dottle of the public pipeline. It would be his head on a platter if he tried.

Nope. It's too late for half measures. It's time to put the whole, shambling, sick, half-paralyzed leviathan on the auction block, and sell it to the highest bidder: buildings, bricks, equipment and jobs.

And let's not get any phony nationalism mixed up in it. If one of the new rich oil countries wants to buy the mess and put it in running order, why not? Canadians can't do it, apparently.

You think this is too drastic? It seems the only alternative we have to limping along with a postal system that the word "rotten" inadequately describes.

You think something as big and important as the postal non-system should be controlled by the government? Hogwash! Anyone with ears to hear or eyes to read knows that government is notably inefficient as an employer.

Let's look at one example. We have two transcontinental railways. CPR, privately owned, has shown a thumping profit year after year. The CNR, government owned, highly subsidized, is always in the red.

You think I'm a little hot today? You're right. Postal strikes have cost me considerable, in terms of anxiety and cash. And I'm only a little frog. Imagine what the lousy service is doing to slow down and thwart large companies, which hire hundreds of thousands.

As I write, postal employees in Toronto are not working, while mail piles up in thousands of tons.

Why are they not working? Because they won't cross the picket lines of another, comparatively small union that is on strike.

And get this. The Post Office gave its non-working employees leave of absence without pay. They were not fired. And those employees have the unbelievable gall to talk of suing the post office because they are not drawing their pay when they are not working, even though they are not on strike. Can you figure that out? It makes my head reel.

This week, I sent a letter "special delivery". It cost me 48 cents in postage. To make me expend such a sum, the letter had to be mighty important. It's sitting in a post office, unsorted, in which the employees are NOT on strike.

I've had enough. Who'll join me? And in closing, may I add that I don't put the blame on the postal union, not all of it. These people are human and will reach for all they can get.

The real root of my rage and fifth-rate Canadian postal non-service is the gutless politicians in Ottawa.

## Back from Eastern front

BY MARK NIBLETT

Last week I attended my last meeting of the York County Board of Education.

The last, because I told the editor that I'm getting shell-shocked; I can't hack it any more. It's four years since I first started covering that board, and they've worn me down.

Nonetheless, I urge the public to attend a meeting. It's a great source of amusement of the "black humour" variety. Last week, for example, the board spent about three-quarters of an hour debating whether or not to open their meetings with a prayer. The inanity of the debate represented an all-time high — or low, depending on how you look at it. Confronted by a financial squeeze that could cripple the whole school system, the trustees feel they should debate matters like this.

For years now, board meetings have been widely recognized as the moral equivalent of being sent to the Eastern Front for those journalists obliged to attend. I can only marvel at the hardness of my colleagues, especially Jim, who has covered the meetings longer than I have. Now that takes guts!

Still, it wasn't all bad. I managed to read quite a number of good books while trustees were droning on about various idiot issues. I used to be able to laugh at them, but I find now the laughter is turning a little sour. These are the people who control better than \$50 million? God help us all.

The fact is that the composition of the board pretty well guarantees its mediocrity and incompetence. First, there are too many members — no group can operate efficiently with 20 members.

The main problem, though, is the quality of the trustees. Understand me, there are some trustees who are genuinely intelligent and concerned, and I respect them. I had great hopes when Don Sim became chairman, because he's one of the best on the board.

Most trustees, though, are the very scraps and sweepings of the electoral system.

Concerned and intelligent people generally steer clear of running for the board; they realize the board is largely powerless. Some of the members that I have seen re-elected or acclaimed are damn near enough to make me wish we could have a dictatorship.

They vary, of course. Some sit in glassy-eyed apathy, apparently sunk or morose thought, and say little or nothing. Others, the ones all reporters really dread, never stop talking. It doesn't matter what the issue is, nor whether the trustee ever heard of it before; he (or she) feels obliged to ramble on endlessly about it. Sim has managed to curb this, but he hasn't stamped it out.

In consequence, the banality of the debate at board meetings is pretty well absolute. It approaches the level of a crowd of kids squabbling in a playground, although it seldom reaches such heights. Boredom is the byword of the board.

My heart goes out to that handful of trustees who have shown themselves able and intelligent. They even have to sit through closed sessions and committee meetings of the board — a punishment I would not wish on my worst enemy.

Well, I'm out of it, thank God. I'll never again have to be a witness to the petty, incompetent, nauseating babble of some trustees who have driven me to the brink of madness. I'll never again have to suffer their petty attempts to force their own ignorant prejudices and beliefs on others. I'm free! Free!

Sure I'm bitter; you would be too; if you'd sat through as many board meetings as I have. Now I feel as though a great weight has been lifted from my back.

I'm copping out, and some poor, wretched reporter is going to have to be sacrificed on the altar of boredom in my place. Whoever you may be, friend, I bleed for you — but not enough to ever go back to the York County Board of Education.



It was a frosty day when the students of Ringwood School lined up for a picture in 1912. All bundled up against the cold, they appear nevertheless to be in high spirits. In the back row (left to right): Alma Brownsberger, Robina McPherson, Irene Brownsberger, Jean Stouffer, Sophie Pollock, Lila Mitchell, Eva Schell, Elsie Hoover, Miss Gilbert (teacher), Wesley Schell, and Walter Miller. Centre row is — Jean

Harper, Cora McPherson, Edith Harper, Murray Ramer, and Bruce Stouffer. Kneeling in the front row are — Alvin Hoover, Arthur Pollock, Everett Pipber, Garnet Brownsberger, Alvin Harper, Mervin Brownsberger, Bernard Harmon, Harbey Schell, Stewart Stouffer, Hubert McPherson and Gordon Ramer.